

Til Folketingets Kommunikationsafdeling

I dagene fra den 28.-31. august vil en irakisk delegation besøge Danmark med det formål at delagtiggøre danske politikere og den danske offentlighed i indsatsen for at skabe en forsoningsproces mellem de religiøse grupperinger (sunnier, shia'er, kristne). Delegationsbesøget er opfølgning på en stor konference afholdt i Bagdad i juni måned (støttet af Pentagon), hvor religiøse ledere fra de forskellige trosretninger samledes på initiativ fra Canon Andrew White, som gennem en årrække har været præst ved den anglikanske kirke i Bagdad. Han er desuden leder af *Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East* (FRRME), som støttes af Tony Blair (jf. www.frrme.org/site/DocServer/23443_FRRME_Newsletter4.pdf?docID=121).

Besøget er en naturlig forlængelse af det nære samarbejde der eksisterer mellem FRRME og den danske repræsentation i Irak. Bo Eric Weber, den danske ambassadør i Irak, udtaler om besøget: "En forsoningskonference i København vil være et lille, men afgørende skridt mod forsoning og fred. For Danmark vil det også være et meget synligt bevis på vores bistand til Irak."

Canon White vil lede delegationen, som inkluderer næstformanden for det irakiske parlament Sheik Khalid Al Atia m.fl. Delegationen er inviteret af Københavns Stiftsudvalg for etniske minoriteter, som har iværksat et samarbejde med Canon White med henblik på at støtte forsoningsarbejdet i Irak. Delegationen vil i Danmark mødes med politikere og kirkelige repræsentanter samt tale ved et offentligt arrangement.

Torsdag den 30. august fra 14:00-16:00 bliver der en høring i Landstingssalen med delegationen under titlen, "Is Peace Possible? Religious Reconciliation and the Future of Iraq". Delegationen er desuden særdeles interesseret i at møde danske folketingsmedlemmer, i særdeleshed medlemmer af Udenrigsudvalget, med henblik på at orientere om og diskutere situationen i Irak fra et freds- og forsoningsperspektiv. Møder mellem danske politikere og delegationen kan finde sted formiddag eller efter nærmere aftale i dagene fra den 28.-31. august, ligesom vi håber at mange politikere vil deltage i høringen i landstingssalen.

For yderligere oplysninger kontakt venligst sognepræst Niels Nymann Eriksen nne@km.dk, mobil 23 480 481.

Med venlig hilsen

Erik Norman Svendsen
Biskop over Københavns Stift

Andrew White har gjort rede for historik og metoder i det religiøse forsoningsarbejde i Irak i en artikel i Peaceworks, som udgives af United States Institute of Peace under den amerikanske kongres. Den 3 sider lange artikel kan findes på <http://www.usip.org/pubs/peaceworks/pw55.pdf>.

Danish Visit

Members of delegation

Canon Andrew White

President of the FRRME. Vicar of St Georges Church, Baghdad and minister to the Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran communities in the International Zone. Canon White has been working in Iraq for the past 9 years. He was previously the Middle East Envoy of George Carey when he was archbishop of Canterbury. As the director of the Iraqi Religious Sectarian Project he is now working with Pentagon, the Iraqi government and Iraqi religious leaders. He has been involved in hostage negotiations and run the religious track of the Middle East Peace Process.

Sheik Khalid Al-Atia

Deputy speaker of the parliament.

Ambassador Sadoon Al Zubaydi

He was formerly Iraqi ambassador to Indonesia, and is now Chief Advisor to the Speaker of Parliament. Has a PhD from Birmingham in Shakespeare, and he has taught English at Bagdad University. Even though he was involved in the former regime as chief translator to Saddam Hussein, he is now very committed to reconciliation and he has been involved with the Iraqi Institute of Peace (IIP). Sunni

Hamid Al Sharifi

Formerly the head of the first Iraqi Mission to Kuwait after 2003. He was very opposed to the previous regime. Despite being a devoted Shia Moslem he is very negative about much of Islam today. He has a special interest in Judaism and not least the Jews of Iraq. He is Secretary General of the Iraqi Centre for Religious Freedom. He is currently at the Iraqi Embassy in Jordan, but is seconded to FRRME for three months working as a consultant on security and terrorism.

Mrs. Samia Aziz Mohamed

Member of the Council of Representatives (Iraqi Parliament). Chair of the Women, Religion and Democracy Group of the IIP (Iraqi Institute of Peace). She is a Fali Kurd (Shia) and Danish Citizen. Received Venstre's Freedom Price 2004.

Samir Al Raheem

A Shia lawyer and expert in the field of Reconciliation. Previously Assistant General Secretary in the IIP, now personal assistant to Andrew White. He will do most of the organizing and coordination of the trip.

Pete Maki

Project director for FRRME and personal assistant of Canon White.